

Serial No.: 10/017,242
Attorney Docket No.: F-419

Patent

Amendment To The Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.-18. (canceled).

19. (currently amended) A method for determining an e-mail address formatting rule corresponding to a domain name, the method comprising:

gathering e-mail address data corresponding to the domain name;

determining the e-mail address formatting rule from a group of formatting rules for the unique identifier portion of the e-mail address based on the gathered e-mail address data; and

electronically storing an association of the e-mail address formatting rule with the domain name,

wherein the e-mail address data comprises a first e-mail address, and the step of determining the e-mail address formatting rule further comprises:

parsing a domain portion of the first e-mail address;

parsing an identifier portion of the first e-mail address; and

determining whether the identifier portion is consistent with one or more known e-mail address formatting rules from a group of at least two known e-mail address formatting rules.

The method of claim 7 wherein the one or more known e-mail address formatting rules are from a list consisting of: last.first, first.last, alphanumeric only, LLLLLLFF, FFLLLLLL, FMLLLLLL, telephone number, punctuation required, minimum number of characters, or maximum number of characters.

20.-22. (canceled).

23. (previously presented) A method for determining an e-mail address formatting rule corresponding to a domain name, the method comprising:

gathering e-mail address data corresponding to the domain name;

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determining the e-mail address formatting rule based on the gathered e-mail address data; and

electronically storing an association of the e-mail address formatting rule with the domain name,

wherein the e-mail address data comprises a first e-mail address, and the step of determining the e-mail address formatting rule further comprises:

parsing a domain portion of the first e-mail address;

parsing an identifier portion of the first e-mail address; and

determining whether the identifier portion is consistent with one or more known e-mail address formatting rules,

wherein the step of determining whether the identifier portion is consistent with one or more known e-mail address formatting rules further comprises:

comparing the identifier portion to a list of known names;

identifying some or all the identifier portion as consistent with one or more known names;

determining whether the identifier portion is consistent with one or more known e-mail address formatting rules that are a function addressees' names,

wherein the step of determining whether the identifier portion is consistent with one or more known e-mail address formatting rules further comprises:

assigning first probabilities that some or all of the identifier portion corresponds to one or more names on the list of known names, based in part on a frequency of the names in a general population;

assigning second probabilities that one or more known e-mail address formatting rules are applicable to the first e-mail address, the second probability being a function of the first probability; and

selecting the e-mail address formatting rule for the first e-mail address based on the known e-mail address formatting rule that has the best second probability.

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24. (previously presented) A method for determining an e-mail address formatting rule corresponding to a domain name, the method comprising:

gathering e-mail address data corresponding to the domain name;

determining the e-mail address formatting rule based on the gathered e-mail address data; and

electronically storing an association of the e-mail address formatting rule with the domain name,

wherein the step for determining the e-mail address formatting rule further comprises:

for a plurality of e-mail addresses having the same domain portion as the first e-mail address, performing the steps of

 parsing a plurality of identifier portions of the plurality of e-mail address;

 comparing the plurality of identifier portions to the list of known names;

 identifying some or all the plurality of identifier portions as consistent with one or more known names;

 assigning first probabilities that some or all of the plurality of identifier portions corresponds to one or more names on the list of known names, based in part on a frequency of the names in a general population;

 assigning second probabilities that one or more known e-mail address formatting rules are applicable to one of the plurality of e-mail addresses, the second probability being a function of the first probability; and

 assigning third probabilities that one or more known e-mail address formatting rules are applicable to the plurality of e-mail addresses based on the cumulative second probabilities; and

 wherein the step of selecting the e-mail address formatting rule for the domain of the first e-mail address is based on the known e-mail address formatting rule that has the best third probability.

25. (canceled).